

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ABF-01 SS-15 SP-02 PM-04 L-03 H-01
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SECAF WASHDC PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ4/7 PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 2118

1. E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, MILI, NL
SUBJ: GAO REPORT MULTINATIONAL F-16 AIRCRAFT PROGRAM

1. INFORMATION AVAILABLE LOCALLY REVEALS THAT THE GAO WILL PUBLISH YET ANOTHER REPORT REGARDING THE F-16 PROGRAM. THIS REPORT COVERS THE MULTINATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM AND MAY BE SCHEDULED FOR PUBLICATION PRIOR TO THE SIGNING OF THE F-16 LETTER OF OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE, (LOA). A REVIEW OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE A ROUGH DRAFT OF THE REPORT INDICATES THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY CREATE MORE SEVERE UNFAVORABLE REACTION THAN THE FIRST REPORT, PARTICULARLY IF IT WERE RELEASED PRIOR TO THE SIGNING OF THE LOA.

2. WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE PROGRAM IS NOT WITHOUT DIFFICULTIES, HOWEVER, THE POINTS RAISED IN THE REPORT DO NOT APPEAR TO BE NEW AND, ACCORDING TO AVAILABLE INFORMATION, SOLUTIONS TO PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED TROUBLESOME AREAS ARE BEING DILIGENTLY SOUGHT.

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3. WITHOUT JUDGING THE ACCURACY OF THE REPORT, BUT WITH A FIRST HAND KNOWLEDGE OF THE EFFECTS OF ADVERSE PRESS AT A CRITICAL STAGE IN THE PROGRAM, IT WOULD NOT SEEM PRUDENT, TO SAY THE LEAST, IF THE REPORT WERE RELEASED PRIOR TO THE SIGNING OF THE LOA.

4. THE DUTCH RECOGNIZE GAO DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE

CONGRESS: HOWEVER, THEY ARE ALSO ACUTELY AWARE OF THE DETRI-
MENTAL EFFECTS OF UNNECESSARY PUBLIC ALARM CAUSED BY PREMATURE
AND MISINTERPRETED REPORTS. AFTER THE LOA SIGNING, THEY ARE
WILLING TO ACCEPT A GAO VISIT SO THAT THE GAO MAY BETTER
SUBSTANTIATE THEIR FINDINGS. (THE DUTCH APPEAR READY TO SIGN
BUT THEY WANT ALL FOUR EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO SIGN TOGETHER).

5. THE DUTCH ALSO RECOGNIZE THE GAO'S AUTHORITY TO DETERMINE
THE FORM AND CONTENT OF THE FINAL REPORT; HOWEVER, THEY WOULD
LIKE TO BE PROVIDED WITH AN ADVANCED DRAFT OF THE REPORT FOR
THEIR COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS AND FOR AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT
TO BE APPROPRIATELY RECOGNIZED IN AN ADDENDUM TO THE FINAL
REPORT.

6. CERTAINLY, NOTHING CAN BE GAINED BY RELEASING THE GAO
REPORT PRIOR TO LOA SIGNING. CONVERSELY, MUCH WOULD BE
GAINED BY THE TIMELY RELEASE OF A REPORT WHICH BENEFITS FROM
THE KNOWLEDGE OF DUTCH OFFICIALS AND PARTICIPATING INDUSTRY.

7. WE WOULD APPRECIATE WASHINGTON VIEWS.
MCCLOSKEY

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